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ICC COMPLETES FIRST PHASE OF SBC ILLINOIS LONG DISTANCE EVALUATION

The Illinois Commerce Commission entered an interim order Thursday in the first phase of an investigation into SBC Illinois' compliance with a federal requirement to open its network to telecommunications companies, seeking to provide customers with alternative telecommunications service.

The Federal Telecommunications Act of 1996 provides that Bell Operating Companies that split from AT&T in 1984, such as SBC Illinois, may provide long distance telecommunications services in their own region, when they have shown that the network is open to its competitors.

The ICC found that SBC Illinois had met some of those conditions, and prescribed remedial actions, which SBC must complete in order to comply with the rest of the federal requirements. The ICC continued its investigation into whether the company has complied with requirements designed to provide equal access through published tariffs, detailed terms and conditions of service and operational support systems that allow seamless transactions to occur between the incumbent and competitor when a customer chooses to change providers.

The Commission initiated this investigation in October 2001 into SBC Illinois' compliance with the federal checklist. It will provide an analysis of whether SBC has met the requirements for long distance approval as well as a record for the Commission's recommendation to the FCC.

Section 271 of the federal Telecommunications Act provides a checklist of 14 measures of competitive behavior. The FCC is required by the Act to consult the state regulatory commission and the federal Department of Justice for verification that operational support systems are working, competitors are able to

purchase parts of the incumbent network needed to provide customer service and that competition is developing.

The ICC will continue its evaluation of those compliance issues in Phase II of this investigation. During the next two and a half months the Commission will examine whether SBC complies with the remedial actions set out in the interim order. The Commission will assess data from months of operational support system testing, review Bearing Point's report on its audit of SBC's operations support system and determine if SBC's plan for compensating competitive local exchange carriers for delayed access is adequate.

SBC has suggested that it will file a petition with the FCC seeking authority to offer long distance telecommunications service in-region by early summer, 2003.

Copies of the Commission's interim order are available on the ICC e-docket system, via the website at **icc.state.il.us**.

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